THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) There are a total of four medical colleges in North Eastern Region—three in Assam and one in Manipur. All the four colleges are recognised.

(b) Central Government has no proposal for setting up new medical colleges. However, the Government has cleared a project for Rs.422.60 crores for establishment of North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences at Shillong. The Institute will have 500 bedded referral hospital with 35 teaching departments at Post-Graduate level in various specilities and Superspecilities and a nursing college with intake of 50 students. Further, Central Government is permitting establishment of new medical colleges under the provisions of Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 as amended and regulations made thereunder. Under the above Regulations, proposals have been received for establishment of medical colleges at Manipur and Tripura. The permission to start these colleges will depend upon fulfilling the qualifying criteria of Medical Council of India Regulations, 1999, availability of infrastructure and recommendations of Medical Council of India thereon.

Amendment of PFA Act

2140. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are in receipt of any representation from any organisation seeking amendment to the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto and action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) Yes Sir. Representation have been received from various organisations seeking amendment in the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.

(b) The amendments suggested include :

(i) Change in the title of the Act.

(ii) Amendment of certain definitions given under the Act.

(iii) Making provisions for giving a counter part of the samples to the vender.

(iv) Harmonization of Penal provisions considering the gravity of the offence.

(c) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has constituted a Group to review the various provisions of the PFA Act, 1954 for considering the representations and suggestions received from various organisations.

News-item "What's Wrong with our Blood"

2141. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "What's wrong with our blood", which appeared in the Times of India, dated 19th September, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to address the problems highlighted in the aforesaid news-item ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Indian Red Cross Society had offered to provide 1000 units of blood among other support to its counterpart, American Red Cross during the September 11 crisis in New York. The American Red Cross, while appreciating such offers from various Red Cross Societies from all over the world declined assistance as they were meeting their own demands.

There are no reliable tests available for detection of carrier state of malaria and hence in United States and some other developed countries, the donors with history of having had malaria in the past or those who have been in malaria endemic regions such as India are deferred as per their national guidelines and US FDA requirements.

News-item "Nicholas Piramal asks DCI to order withdrawal of Grastim Stocks"

2142. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Nicholas Piramal asks DCI to order withdrawal of Grastim stocks", which appeared in the Financial Express, dated 21st September, 2001;